

Joe Kimball, *MinnPost*

When the National Park Service shot down plans for a new bridge across the St. Croix River in October on grounds that it would "fundamentally change the scenic qualities" of the river, bridge supporters began looking for ways to overcome or bypass that decision.

Today, Congresswoman Michele Bachmann introduced legislation to build the bridge, despite the ruling. Co-author of the bill is GOP Wisconsin Congressman Sean Duffy.

Said Bachmann:

*"For decades a new river crossing has been needed, but the project continues to be stalled due to outlandish lawsuits and bureaucratic delays. Most recently, in October 2010, the National Park Service reversed their support of the project, effectively blocking all construction of the bridge. My bill references the first decision by the National Park Service that favored the bridge project and deemed it consistent with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.*

*"I urge my colleagues to support this bill so that the citizens of Minnesota and Wisconsin can safely cross the St. Croix River. These citizens count on their elected officials to recognize the need for infrastructure and my bill responds to their pleas for a new crossing. I look forward to the groundbreaking of the new bridge, and the jobs and positive economic impact it will bring to the region."*

At least one of her colleagues, though, U.S. Rep. Betty McCollum, is strongly opposed to building the bridge if it violates the scenic provisions of the Wild & Scenic Rivers Act, and says it won't happen. She said in a letter to St. Croix County Board of Supervisors:

*"I will do everything in my power as a Member of Congress to defeat any federal legislation that lifts the protections from the Lower St. Croix National Scenic Riverway for a project of this magnitude. Frankly, the prospect of such legislation becoming law is negligible which makes such a strategy more of a political distraction than contributing to a real transportation solution."*